

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes

February 15, 2017

Commission Members Present:

Bianca Chang
Joan Hash
Reverend Turner
Ilene Kessler
Peter Hwang
Kui Zhao
Bob Ford
Shiraz Ahmed

Commission Members Absent:

Opel T. Jones
Ivette Lopez
Frank Eastham
Misbah Farooqi

Staff:

Dr. Barbara J. Sands, HRC Executive Secretary
Stephanie Chapple, HRC Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. PUBLIC FORUM – HRC Chair and members welcomed Steve Charing, public citizen for attending.

3. HRC CASES UPDATE – LEGAL COUNSEL – HRC Case No. 17-01-001 appeal denied

4. APPROVE MINUTES

January meeting minutes approved.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT –

- Written report submitted. Reverend Turner expressed condolences and support to Joan and Dr. Sands for the recent loss of their loved ones.
- Chair thanked HRC members for input in drafting letter to the editor regarding Anti-Discrimination in the county. If anyone sees our letters printed in any of the local papers, please let everyone know. Thank you Stephanie for getting the letters to the press.
- **CR-180** – HRC has been charged with studying recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices of various organizations in the county, including HCC. Two inquiries have been received regarding what data will be requested and when will the study begin. Members still researching which firm will be best-suited to do the study. Please forward any names, firms, etc. to Reverend Turner. Dr. Sands contacted Booz-Allen. Their guidelines for a study would need to go back 5 years, numerous staff, and would cost in the millions to complete. Sub-committee members will draft a letter to the Council stating what may be accomplished by the deadline. Sub-committee members have been researching law firms, and will present all information to the entire body during the March meeting.
- **Goals Committee** – Reverend Turner thanked Bianca and Peter for joining him at the meeting with David Lee and Beth Vessey. Please see discussion items listed on hard copy report. Committee wants Commission to connect more with the community, possibly conduct an awareness campaign. Per Reverend Turner, committee would like a high level Public Relations and Communications Strategist. This person would oversee/write press releases, public statements, identify targeted goals for HRC, come up with a strategy for HRC to connect more with citizens, work with all forms of social media, etc. Per Reverend Turner, HRC's real need is not just to have a "task person to follow through on what is given to him/her. We need someone with high level PR strategy, someone with a big picture, coming up with a strategy for the HRC to inform us of the different components, to lead/inform Commissioners with overall communications suggestions, ideas, etc. A strategist in public relations/ communications, who will also be an implementer." Per Reverend Turner "focus should not be on solely website, but focus should be on addressing all of our needs, understanding different components of what is expected, alternative options, etc." Peter commented that this person would have experience to recommend a PR strategy of how to reach out to the public and advise the Commission. Dr. Sands commented that the website is standard, similar to the other boards and commissions' websites, where content is currently posted for meeting agendas, minutes, and a few fliers of announcement of upcoming events. Anything outside of that would have to go through Public Information Office. Joan commented "professionals who specialize in this level of expertise are out there, but you have to be willing to pay for this high-level position. Contractors also get paid to do this type of work." Reverend Turner asked "what are some ways to reach out to our constituents? We need resources to accomplish what is being asked of us." Dr. Sands commented "it would be nice to use PIO. With these

expectations, an email was sent to David Lee asking if this would require expansion of someone's job description? Or, would this person need to receive additional training?" Reverend Turner suggested having the option to offer live interactive workshops on website, podcasts, webinars, etc. Joan commented "members should review other Boards/Commissions websites."

6. COMMITTEES/ REPORTS

- Finance & Fair Lending with Housing – *Ilene, Ivette, Joan* - Ilene attended a 3-day conference. Ilene indicated all flood insurance coverages are over in April, which will affect county residents. More information will be shared as Ilene receives it.
- Legislation – *Ivette* – No report.
- Education, Public Safety and Student Life Committee – *Frank, Reverend Turner, Opel, Ivette* – no report.
- HRC Awards Committee – *Bianca & Opel* – To date, only 1 nomination has been received. Bianca encouraged members to please submit nominations. Reminder – award program is on 4/20/17, the same date as our regularly scheduled meeting.
- Human Trafficking Committee – ***Peter, Shiraz and Joan*** – Peter indicated committee will be reaching out to other county groups who assist victims, as well as, follow up with HCPD to see what progress has been made in the past few months, per the committee's letter that was written. Per Dr. Sands, 'One Voice' asked that HRC sponsor an HT event to inform, educate, and bring awareness to the community. HT now falls under the Community Services Office. Ilene will work with Dr. Sands to invite speakers, survivors, etc. to a program for Realtors, professionals in the housing industry on "what to look for? What to do when we see suspicious activity? etc."
- LGBTQ Committee – *Opel* – Per Dr. Sands, PFLAG will host event, Queens and Queers and Cocktails" on 5/11/17. Former HRC member Catherine Hyde asked if OHR/HRC will support this event again this year by purchasing 2 tickets. Please contact Dr. Sands/Stephanie if you're interested in attending.
- Aging, Disability and Health Care Committee – *Bianca* – See written report. Affordable Care Act will still be in place for 2017. Bianca will share more information as she receives it.
- HRC Goals Committee – Peter, Bianca, Rev. Turner – report discussed in Chair's report.
- Ad-Hoc Committee/Nominating Committee – Shiraz, Peter, Joan – See written report. Sub-committee members interviewed 17 candidates; 6 were sent to the County Executive's Office for consideration. Peter is hopeful that HRC will be informed during the process with the selection. Per Reverend Turner, Stephanie will invite outgoing members to the March meeting. Discussion – should HRC plan a dinner, or invite Frank/Ivette to March meeting with refreshments, or both. Dr. Sands will review budget. Members should consider covering their own cost if the decision is to go out for a formal dinner.

6. STUDENT REPORT – No report.

7. STAFF REPORT/UPDATES – See hard copy report submitted. Howard County is working closely with other counties with legislation to add Transgender as a protected class. Currently, the law is only in 2 counties in Maryland.

IOAHRA – Proposal completed for bid to have conference in Howard County in 2018. Commissioners, please review write-up on play "Disgraced." Production will be shown during 3 recurring weekends. OHR/HRC, HCPD, and HCPSS will work in collaboration to support this initiative. Thank you to all HRC members who attended the annual MLK Celebration. Students from various county schools participated in this special program to honor the legacy of our nation's greatest leaders. Maryland Association of Human Rights Agencies (MAHRA) will host Human Rights Day in Annapolis on 3/3. Dr. Calvin Ball, Council Chair, is invited to speak.

9. NEW BUSINESS – Per Bianca, there will be a Multi-Cultural Awareness community event at Marriotts Ridge H.S. on 4/22 from 9a – 3p. A volunteer sign-up sheet will be circulated for HRC members to assist with greeting visitors, distributing brochures, etc. Per Dr. Sands, please be prepared to discuss the write-up of the play "Disgraced" at the March meeting, and consider what month the writer should be invited to an upcoming meeting to speak to all members.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES –

II. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.